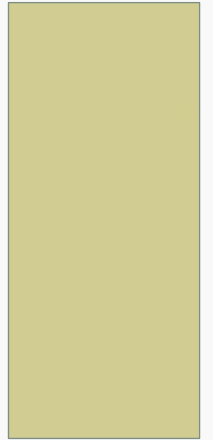


## 4.5 DAILY LIFE IN THE REPUBLIC



# Beliefs

The Romans were full of superstitions. Yet, these superstitions helped them in developing a distinct identity.

Essentially, they adopted the Greek **pantheon** of the Olympian gods of Greece – synthesizing them with their own deities.

They believed in gods, werewolves and magic.

They also inherited the dark arts of laying curses as well as **divination** from the Etruscans, and adopted the concept of astrology and the belief in the Signs of the Zodiac from their contacts in the East.

**Pontifex Maximus** – supervision of the official religions – also in charge of the Roman calendar which was an ordering of the month for when which deity would be honoured.

- Elected by the people
- Supervised the work of various groups of priests who performed duties for the state



In addition to deities, Romans believed in a number of spirits.

- In the fire, water, stones and trees
- Watched over everyday activities such as planting seeds and baking bread
  - The success and happiness of a family depended on the goodwill of various spirits
    - Offerings from the head of the family to appease the supernatural beings: wine, incense
  - *Lares* were spirits of family ancestors who protected the household
  - *Penates* were spirits who protected the storehouse, making sure the family had enough to eat

# Family Life

The Roman Republic was based on the family unit as the building block of society.

- **Paterfamilias:** male head of the household; legal authority over wife, offspring and slaves
  - “owner of the family estate”
  - Held the right to abuse or even kill, sell off unwanted children into slavery
  - Duty to the community: raise healthy citizens of Rome, participate and if possible serve in Rome's political, religious and social life: good citizen
  - Only a Roman citizen could hold this title; only one per household
  - Ensure the family adheres to The Law of the Twelve Tables



# Inheritance

Inheritance passed through the male line: this made adoption a regular part of society.

- Younger men even adopted older men at times
  - Adoption was not personal
- Men who kept having daughters were able to divorce and remarry at will (it was thought to be the mother's fault)
- Julius Caesar had several wives – in his last will he was obliged to adopt Octavian, the son of his niece

# Children

Marriage was a duty instead of a pleasure – often partners didn't have the freedom of choice.

- Children were well cared for (especially males)
- Inheritance created a concern for legitimacy
  - A newly born infant had to be recognized by the father
  - Laid on the floor and the paterfamilias would try and recognize the child
    - Picked up if recognized
    - Put on public display if not recognized – a childless person could take the child for his own or it was left to die



# Education

- Primary education which began at 6 or 7 was not compulsory
- Only the wealthy could afford to send their children to a school – *ludus* – teachers charged high fees

Males and females were brought up together until puberty, oftentimes by a nurse or family tutor if the family was very wealthy.

- Boys and girls were taught to read and write
- Girls were taught in the arts of singing, dancing, spinning and weaving and rarely went to secondary education - learn the skills of the household



# Education Continued

The Roman Empire had formal schools and universities

- Regular hours, vacations, homework

Most boys also left school after the elementary level \$

- Secondary began at 10-11
  - *Grammaticus*: Greek and Roman literature, language, history, geography, geometry, music and astronomy
- At 13-14, boys were educated in speaking and debating skills
  - *Rhetor* or expert speaker

After a male youth was formally educated, they were introduced to public life.

- Forum Romanum, dressed in a toga of manhood
- Expected to pursue a career in the law courts or army
- Men were expected to serve the states needs before their own



# Women

Girls were educated in the home or sent to elementary school until marriage.

- The normal age for marriage was 15
- Other than the obligation to provide children, women in the Roman Empire had a great deal of freedom
  - Go out shopping
  - Attend to business
  - Accompany their husband to dinner
  - Attend public games and theatre

## Women Continued...

Women could own property, work outside of the home and manage their own businesses

- Not allowed to hold government positions
- Not allowed to vote
  - Women exerted influence over political affairs



# Slaves

Slaves were at the base of the social pyramid, and they could be both freedmen (released from masters) or current (bought and sold).

- Imported slaves from Britain, Greece, Egypt and North Africa
- Considered property, not people, had no rights
  - Some were domestic servants, some worked in beautifying the city and others trained as gladiators
  - Some educated slaves were employed to keep records or teach children
  - Had to do their master's bidding – if not could be punishable by death

A Roman could grant a slave freedom as a reward for loyal service

- Slaves could also buy their freedom if they could save enough
- Many slaves received good treatment, but many others suffered brutal conditions and tried to escape





# Tunic

- Worn by the commoners
- Made of two square pieces
  - A back and a front, sewn together with holes for the arms and neck
  - Worn as a sleeveless gown, tied at the waist
- The tunic of a knight had two narrow purple stripes over each shoulder
- The tunic was also worn underneath the toga or stola

# Toga

- Distinctive dress of the free Roman
  - Worn only by Roman males
- A piece of cloth in the shape of an oval – typically 3.5 metres x 2 meters at the widest point
- Colour varied depending on status
  - Natural colour for ordinary use
  - Pure white for members being elected for office
  - Dark for a person in mourning
- Broad purple stripe – membership in the Senate or narrow stripe – knight – the lower edge of the cloth



The draping of the toga was essential for a man to be considered civilized.

- Often a slave trained in the proper procedures would assist the person
  - Folded lengthwise with 0.5m of the material on the inside
  - Roman would stand 1m from the left end and extend their left arm - long straight edge was draped over the left arm until it reached the floor – the stripe hung down the back
  - The rest was draped loosely across the shoulders and back, underneath the right armpit
  - The end was tucked inside the fold of the cloth

# Stola

Worn by Roman women

- Made of fine wool or silk
- Women of rank would wear a long stola with a train at the back
- The amount of material depended on the wearer
  - Length: ankle to shoulder and back again below the waist
  - Width: double from wrist to wrist with arms extended
  - Stitched together into a tube
  - Holding the material at ankle length, the rest would be draped over the outside
  - Held with a belt





# Latin

- Romans spoke Latin, which spread throughout the Mediterranean (only Greek survived)
- For next thousand years, Latin was the language of Roman government, legal system and became the international language of the Christian church, education and scholarship
- Latin still to this day has a strong presence in language of medicine and law





# Examples of Latin

- **Veni, vidi, vici**
- "I came, I saw, I conquered"
- **Alter ego**
- "another I"
- **Bona fide**
- "in good faith"
- **Et cetera**
- "and other"
- **Exit or exenut**
- "He / she / they go out"
- **Habeas corpus**
- "you must have the fact / body of the crime"
- **Via**
- "by way of"
- **Vice versa**
- "the other way around"